



ENVIRONMENT Council

Luxembourg, 26 June 2019

Chair: **Grațiela Leocadia Gavrilescu**, Romanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment and **Ioan Deneș**, Minister of Waters and Forests

European Commission representatives: Commissioner **Karmenu Vella** and Commissioner **Miguel Arias Cañete**.

Starting time: 10:00

ORDER OF THE ITEMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The Environment Council will start with the adoption of conclusions on chemicals entitled '**Towards a sustainable chemicals policy strategy of the Union**'. Ministers will have a discussion on the **regulation on water reuse** for agricultural irrigation with the aim of reaching a general approach. The Council will also have an exchange of views on the **Environmental Implementation Review**.

During an informal ministerial lunch, **single use plastics** and the next steps in our common action for **combating marine litter** will be discussed.

Under any other business, the Romanian Presidency will inform ministers on the state of play regarding the discussion on a **strategic long-term vision for a climate neutral economy**. The Presidency will also present the state of play on two current legislative proposals: the regulation on **LIFE** and the regulation on **monitoring, reporting and verification for shipping**, which tackles the issue of greenhouse gas emissions in maritime transport.

The Dutch delegation will inform colleagues about a conference on **aviation tax** related to tackle CO2 emissions in aviation. The Austrian delegation will inform ministers about a workshop on the future **8th Environment Action Programme**. The Bulgarian delegation will raise possible European measures to support **clean mobility**, in particular electromobility.

The Commission will give a presentation of its communication on the **draft integrated national energy and climate plans**. The Presidency and the Commission will inform the Council about recent international meetings. The French delegation will debrief ministers on the **G7 Environment Ministers meeting** that took place on 5 May and the Slovenian delegation will inform about the management of large carnivores.

Finally, the Finnish delegation will present the work programme of the incoming Presidency.

Press conference: At the end of the meeting, +/- 18:30

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[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)
[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

CONCLUSIONS ON CHEMICALS

Environment ministers will discuss priorities for a **sustainable EU chemicals policy strategy**. The aim of the discussion is to agree on conclusions which will give political steering in this regard.

In their conclusions, ministers intend to address in particular:

- The need to **improve and mainstream the risk assessment and management of chemicals across EU legislation** in order to increase the coherence and effectiveness of the EU chemicals-related legislation.
- The need to develop a relevant mechanism coordinating the protection of vulnerable groups such as **children and pregnant and breastfeeding women**, including by introducing consistent risk management requirements into relevant pieces of EU legislation regarding substances of concern, including neurotoxins and endocrine disruptors.
- The need to develop and implement an **early warning system** at EU level for identifying new, emerging chemical risks that allows for appropriate action to be taken to protect human health and the environment.
- The call to promote approaches such as **green and sustainable chemistry and non-chemical alternatives** and to stimulate technical research and the development of appropriate methodologies and service-based models.
- The need to develop, without further delay, **a Union strategy for a non-toxic environment**, based on the commitment in the 7th Environment Action Programme, which proposes clear medium to long-term objectives for a comprehensive sustainable EU chemicals policy.
- The need to ensure financing and resourcing for the **European Chemicals Agency**, and its involvement in other legislative areas.
- The importance of accelerating action to reduce the risk from **pharmaceuticals** and their residues to the environment.
- The need for an action plan on dossier compliance for **REACH** and for improving the REACH authorisation and restriction procedures.
- The need to collect and make available research data on the characterization, the hazard and potential exposure of **nanomaterials** that have not yet been registered under REACH because their yearly tonnage is below the threshold of 1 tonne/year.
- The need to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment by minimising exposure to **endocrine disruptors** and by stimulating substitution by safer chemicals.

WATER REUSE

The Council will have a discussion on the regulation on **water reuse**. The aim of the discussion is to reach agreement on the Council position (general approach).

Water is a precious resource. This proposal aims to contribute to **alleviating water scarcity across the EU, in the context of adaptation to climate change**. It contains new rules to stimulate and facilitate the use of treated urban waste water for agricultural irrigation, whenever this is appropriate and cost-efficient. Fully in line with the circular economy, it will improve the efficient use of water in the EU.

The proposal lays down strict harmonised standards for the quality of reclaimed water and for monitoring compliance with these standards. This ensures that human and animal health as well as the environment are protected. The existing EU rules for hygiene of foodstuffs continue to apply and are fully respected. Ensuring that enough water is available for the irrigation of fields, in particular during heatwaves and severe droughts, can help **prevent crop shortfall and food shortage**.

The reuse of appropriately treated urban waste water has a lower environmental impact than alternative sources of water supply such as water transfers or desalination. The proposed new rules will be especially useful in regions where the demand for water still exceeds supply, despite measures to lower the demand.

Several member states including Spain, France, Malta and Greece already successfully apply water reuse systems. At several meetings of the working party on environment, **national experts shared their knowledge and experience** with delegates of member states which may choose to start reusing water for agricultural irrigation in the future.

Background and next steps

The Commission's proposal for a regulation on minimum requirements for water reuse was adopted on 28 May 2018 as part of the effort to deliver on the circular economy action plan.

The European Parliament's plenary adopted its first reading position on the proposal on 12 February 2019.

The general approach constitutes the Council's mandate for future negotiations with the European Parliament. Trilogue negotiations are expected to start under the Finnish Presidency.

[Commission proposal](#) (+ADD 1)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Ministers will have a policy debate on the findings of the 2019 Environmental Implementation Review (EIR). The EIR is a tool which helps member states to **improve the implementation of environmental policies and legislation**, and to address any implementation gaps. It is also an opportunity for member states to engage in **dialogue and cooperation** with the Commission, giving the Commission valuable feedback which it can use to improve its work, and among themselves to address common challenges and **share best practices**.

Good implementation of EU environmental policy and legislation helps create a healthier environment, more sustainable growth, lower environmental, economic and social costs, greater innovation, more jobs and a level playing field for economic operators. The environmental, economic and social costs of not implementing the environmental acquis are estimated to be 55 billion Euro every year.

The EIR was first launched by the Commission in February 2017. It follows a two-yearly cycle, which means that this year the Commission has finalised another comprehensive analysis of the state of implementation of policies and legislation in the field of environment.

The Presidency will invite ministers to respond to the following questions:

Questions for ministers

1. **How can the gaps in implementation of environmental policies and legislation as identified in the Environmental Implementation Review be addressed?**
2. **What could be done at national and European level to make public administrations more effective and efficient in implementing environmental policies and legislation?**
3. **How could environmental objectives be more integrated with policy areas that have a significant environmental footprint, such as energy, transport and agriculture?**

[Presidency background paper for the exchange of views](#)

Commission communication on the "[Environmental Implementation Review 2019: A Europe that protects its citizens and enhances their quality of life](#)" - In this Communication, the Commission defines common trends at EU level, draws conclusions and gives recommendations for improving implementation in the member states

[Annex 1 with priority actions proposed in the country reports, clustered by theme](#)

[Annex 2 - a policy background document introducing the topics in the country reports](#)

Annex 3 to 30: 28 country reports analysing the state of implementation as per 1 January 2019, progress since 2017, good practices and suggested priority actions ([Belgium](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Croatia](#), [Cyprus](#), [Slovakia](#), [Sweden](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Czech republic](#), [France](#), [Hungary](#), [Ireland](#), [Italy](#), [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), [Poland](#), [Romania](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), [The Netherlands](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [Germany](#), [Greece](#), [Austria](#))

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Clean planet for all: strategic long-term vision for a climate neutral economy
 - [Information from the Presidency](#)
 - Current legislative proposals (public deliberation)
 - Regulation on LIFE
 - [Information from the Presidency](#)
 - Regulation on monitoring, reporting and verification for shipping
 - [Information from the Presidency \(ADD1\)](#)
 - Conference on carbon pricing and aviation taxes (The Hague, 20 and 21 June 2019)
 - [Information from the Netherlands delegation](#)
 - Workshop on the "Future Environment Action Programme" (Hainburg, Austria, 11-12 June 2019)
 - [Information from the Austrian delegation](#)
 - Possible European measures to support clean mobility and in particular electromobility
 - Information from the Bulgarian delegation (10377/19)
 - Communication on the draft integrated national energy and climate plans
 - Information from the Commission (10251/19)
 - Reports on main recent international meetings:
 - Triple Conference of the Parties to the Basel (COP 14), Rotterdam (COP 9) and Stockholm (COP 9) Conventions (Geneva, 29 April - 10 May 2019)
 - Fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) (Nairobi, 11 - 15 March 2019)
 - Information from Presidency and the Commission
 - G7 Environment ministers' meeting (Metz, France, 5 May 2019)
 - Information from the French delegation
 - The management of large carnivores - challenges and solutions
 - Information from the Slovenian delegation
 - Work programme of the incoming Presidency
 - Information from the Finnish delegation
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